

HOMELESS ADMISSIONS IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

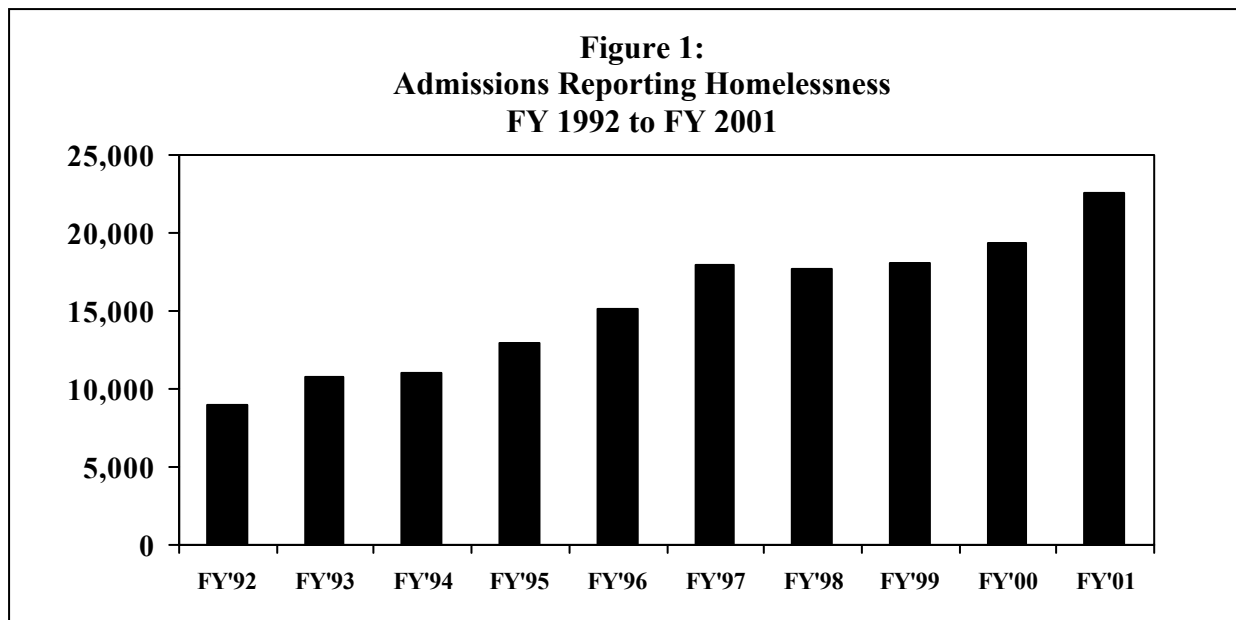
Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services

This fact sheet provides information on homeless persons admitted to substance abuse treatment services. Data were reported to the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS) Management Information System (SAMIS) in FY 2001.^{1,2}

Characteristics of Homeless Admissions:

In FY 2001, 18.5% (22,539) admissions to BSAS reported living on the streets or in a shelter. These admission records are classified as homeless.

- 80% (18,087) of homeless admissions were male and 20% (4,452) were female.
- 64% (14,471) were white non-Latino, 17% (3,850) were black non-Latino, 16% (3,497) were Latino, and 3% (721) were categorized as other/unknown.
- Average age of homeless admissions was 35 years. 68% (15,360) were between the ages of 30-49.
- Nearly a quarter of homeless admissions (5,396) received prior mental health treatment.
- 42.7% (9,626) had children 18 years or younger.
- Over 67% (15,252) had at least 12 years of education or more.



As illustrated in Figure 1, homeless admissions have increased from 10.7% (8,947) in FY 1992 to 18.5% (22,539) in FY 2001. Reports of the number of individuals living in Massachusetts who are homeless has increased as well. According to a September 2001 report from The University of Massachusetts Boston's McCormack Institute of Public Affairs, there was an unduplicated count of 10,219 homeless individuals in 2000 as compared with 8,411 in 1999.³

¹ SAMIS data include information reported by all BSAS licensed substance abuse treatment programs for FY 1992 to FY 2001. These data include admissions to BSAS licensed programs that may be reimbursed by Medicaid or other public payers. Trends are reported beginning in FY 1992 when data were first collected in their current form.

² This fact sheet may contain small numbers. Trends based upon small numbers should be interpreted with caution.

³ Meschede, T., Kahan, M., & Hayes, M. (2001) "A Comparative Portrait of Individuals and Families Utilizing Massachusetts Emergency Shelter Programs in 1999 and 2000." Boston, MA: The John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs.

Types of Services:

In FY 2001, the 22,539 homeless were admitted to the following program types:

- 67.3% (15,162) to acute treatment services (ATS). These 15,162 admissions constitute 27.9% of all ATS admissions.
- 10% (2,244) to residential services. These 2,244 admissions constitute 35.5% of all residential admissions (i.e., Therapeutic Communities, Social Models, and Recovery Homes).
- 9.7% (2,180) to ambulatory services.
- 13% (2,953) to all other modalities.

As compared with non-homeless clients, homeless individuals are more likely to return for multiple services. In FY 2001, nearly 52% of the homeless admissions had 9 or more prior admissions to the above modalities.

- 5.3% (1,192) had no prior admissions.
- 12.6% (2,843) had 1 to 2 prior admissions.
- 12.4% (2,795) had 3 to 4 prior admissions.
- 10.6% (2,392) had 5 to 6 prior admissions.
- 7.5% (1,679) had 7 to 8 prior admissions.
- 51.6% (11,638) had 9 or more prior admissions.

Primary Substance of Use:

In FY 2001, homeless admissions reported alcohol and heroin most often as the primary drug for which they were seeking treatment.

- 49.1% (11,067) reported alcohol as primary substance of use.
- 40.6% (9,148) reported heroin as primary substance of use.
- 3.8% (851) reported crack as primary substance of use.
- 3.4% (758) reported cocaine as primary substance of use.
- 1.6% (364) reported marijuana as primary substance of use.

Substances Used in Past Year:

In FY 2001, 74.8% (16,867) of homeless admissions reported using alcohol within the 12 months prior to admission to treatment.

- 47.7% (10,744) reported past year heroin use.
- 28.6% (6,438) reported past year cocaine use.
- 20.6% (4,632) reported past year crack use.
- 21.3% (4,798) reported past year marijuana use.
- 35.2% (7,930) reported past year needle use.

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